Class 269.6R Book H923
General Theological Seminary Library
CHELSEA SQUARE, NEW YORK

HOW TO PREACH A MISSION

HOW TO PREACH A MISSION

PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS FOR MISSION SERVICES

"Go ye and preach the Gospel to every creature"

BY

JAMES O. S. HUNTINGTON

OF

THE ORDER OF THE HOLY CROSS

GIFT THEO SEMINARY LIBRARY NEW YORK

NEW YORK

EDWIN S. GORHAM

1916

269.6R
H923

72876

Copyright, 1916
By EDWIN S. GORHAM

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

PREFACE

The following chapters are the result of a suggestion made to the writer by one of the members of the Society of Mission Priests of the Society of St. John the Evangelist in Boston. The Fathers of that Society have most kindly collaborated with the writer, carefully revising each chapter, and making many valuable suggestions, which have uniformly been adopted. Most of the chapters first appeared as articles in the *Holy Cross Magazine*. The chapter "What is a Mission Service?" has been printed separately, and may be had from *Holy Cross, West Park, N. Y.*, for two cents a copy.

The only merit claimed for this volume is that it is not theoretic but entirely practical, being the fruit of some thirty years of actual experience in conducting Parochial Missions on the part of the members of Religious Communities.

JAMES O. S. HUNTINGTON,
Superior O. H. C.

Holy Cross,
Epiphany, 1916.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	vii
DOES THE PARISH NEED A MISSION? . .	1
IS THE PARISH READY FOR A MISSION? .	9
HOW SHOULD A PARISH PREPARE FOR A MISSION?	16
WHAT IS A "MISSION SERVICE"? . . .	26
ADJUNCTS OF A PAROCHIAL MISSION . .	43

HOW TO CONDUCT A PAROCHIAL MISSION

CHAPTER I

DOES THE PARISH NEED A MISSION?

"DOES the parish need a Mission?" That is a question which a considerable number of parish priests ask themselves from time to time. That is the first question to decide.

The Aim

To begin with, we ought to have a clear understanding as to what is aimed at in a parochial Mission. It is natural to look upon a Mission as an effort to interest and attract people who, whether baptized or not, are living apart from the Church, perhaps even "without God in the world," and to bring them to faith and repentance and the reception of the Sacraments. Fr. Paul Bull of the Community of the Resurrection in

England begins his Handbook with the statement: "A Mission is a special effort to convert souls to God." This, to most minds, seems to indicate an appeal to those who are "outside the Church," who are openly ungodly, unbelieving, or immoral.

Now if a parish were made up of well-taught, faithful, and earnestly Christian people, who came to their duties regularly and were eager to extend the Kingdom of God among men, it might be possible in such a parish to hold a Mission to reach and save "the lost," whether poor or rich.

But the truth is that there are comparatively few parishes in this country which answer to such a description. The average parish in the American Church is made up of three classes of people.

1. There is a small, inner circle of persons, men and women, who are devoted to the interests of the Church, largely as a local organization. They are the "Church workers." They raise the funds to finance the parish. They teach in the Sunday School. They carry on the guilds and missionary societies and charitable agencies. They are regular in coming to the services, week-days as well as Sundays. They are genuinely interested in the support and carrying on of the

parish. The motives which impel them to take this active part in the life of the parish are very various. A few of them are persons of deep spirituality, and occasionally of thorough, practical understanding of the Church's Faith and of the practice of the Catholic Religion. Others are persons of natural energy and large-heartedness, who find in the Church the satisfaction of their religious cravings, and a welcome opportunity of ministering to the needs of those about them. Others, still, throw themselves into the work of the Church for personal reasons, to relieve the monotony of a narrow domesticity, to enjoy association with sympathetic fellow-workers, to liberate an impulse to "social service." Along with the above there are often several men in this "inner circle" who devote much interest and attention to the parish, serve on the vestry, represent the parish in the diocesan convention, entertain the Bishop when he comes, although not communicants of the Church, possibly not even baptized.

2. Outside this inner circle is the main body of the communicants of the parish. They have inherited their religion from their parents and grand-parents, or they have been led to find their place in the Church, and have

been confirmed, often with very little instruction. Many of this class, although they occasionally make their communions, have substituted morality for religion. Many look upon the Church as a useful contribution to the well-being of society, supplying a valuable element at such events as weddings and funerals; they may even regard it to a large extent in the light of a social club. Many of them, the men especially, regard religion as a department of life carefully shut off from their everyday business and their public engagements. Very few of these people have ever had any religious experience, or feel any uneasiness or misgiving at the absence of it. Not many of this class have any intelligent apprehension of the Christian Faith. Even if they were taught that Faith in their early years their subsequent acceptance of worldly ideals and standards makes it impossible for them to feel the Faith as a power which moulds their lives.

3. The third class in our congregations consists of those who are not conscious of any definite relation to the Church. Their occasional attendance at Church services does not carry them beyond the position of visitors and onlookers. Some of them are deeply religious persons, but their religion is

almost entirely individualistic in character. They have found in the Church nothing which meets their spiritual longings. They have, perhaps, been repulsed by the coldness of the spiritual atmosphere, the worldliness and unreality of the habitual Church-goers, and, sore at heart with secret disappointment, they have ceased to believe that the Church can mean anything to them.

To expect a congregation which is made up of these three classes of people to throw itself enthusiastically into an effort to win the "unchurched masses" to allegiance to Christ is manifestly absurd. It is the professedly Christian folk who must first of all be won to a true discipleship to Him. This is anything but a simple task. It is not nearly as simple as it was for the Apostles to win the heathen of the Roman Empire to faith in the crucified Nazarene. For these people have no hereditary religious convictions, not even the convictions of Natural Religion. As for Revealed Religion they grew up in practical ignorance of it, and, as adults, have come to know it only to misunderstand it. In one of our large boys' schools lately the headmaster averred that less than half the pupils in the entering class had ever had a Bible in their hands, although

most of them came from professedly Church families. This is instructive as showing how wide-spread among those considered enlightened is this lack of knowledge.

We come back, then, to the question: "What should be the aim of a two or three weeks' Mission in the average parish of the American Church?" *It should be a time for bringing home to the whole congregation a fresh and constraining knowledge of the holiness and love of God, and, as a consequence of this, the hatefulness and the fatal character of sin, and then a clear and persuasive explanation of the revelation of Grace in our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the means which God has provided by His Holy Spirit in His Church for deliverance from sin, and for union with Himself.*

Unless the order just indicated is observed there is almost sure to be a sense of unreality and exaggeration, and souls will be left bewildered and astray.

Even in his own time St. Augustine, although he preached to some three thousand people every day in the basilica of Hippo, was forced to declare, speaking evidently of his own people: "God is so little loved, because He is so little known." Is it not evident that, in this age of widely-extended

secular learning, there is a yet deeper ignorance of the Great Reality? "The people perish from lack of knowledge." Yet the *knowledge of God* is not mere *knowledge about God.* The affections and the will, not the mind alone, make man "*capax Dei,*" able to receive God's communication of Himself. The man who would bring his fellowmen to know God must speak "heart to heart." *Cor ad cor loquitur.* That is why Mission *preaching* usually goes before *instruction.*

It is, of course, possible to hurl invectives at certain forms of sin, to declaim against anti-social vices, and such denunciations may excite emotion and gather crowds. But a change of manners and morals does not necessarily involve a change of heart. There will be no deep and fruitful penitence until sin is seen against the background of the love of God for a fallen world, the love of the Good Shepherd, with the bleeding hands and feet, seeking the wandering sheep. The Cross is the outcome of infinite charity on the part of God. And it is the cause of heart-broken contrition on the part of man.

So, also, it is of scant avail to place the Sacraments before people who have no sense of spiritual need, no longing to be cleansed in Baptism and Absolution, strengthened in

Confirmation, or nourished and transformed in Holy Communion.

That people should know that God loves them, should feel that they have disappointed His love and gone away from Him, should see how they can be restored to God in Christ and through His love live in fellowship with Him,— this must be the aim of a Mission.

CHAPTER II

IS THE PARISH READY FOR A MISSION?

Necessary Conditions

NEED is not always proof that the supply for the need can be received. A patient may need change of air but may not be equal to the exertion of travel. So it does not follow from the fact that a parish needs the stimulus that a Mission might bring, that the parish is in a state to profit by a Mission.

In the first place a warning must be given against one very natural mistake. Suppose a parish has been "running down"— the congregations growing smaller, workers falling off, finances shrinking, a general sense of failure and discouragement pervading the minds of the people. Would it not be well to hold a Mission with the hope of re-awakening interest, and restoring prosperity? No. *Something* is needed, no doubt. But it is not a Mission. To attempt to hold a Mission in such a parish would be like applying a galvanic battery to a moribund and prostrate form. There might be a simula-

tion of energy, but it would only exhaust what little vitality remains and death would be not postponed but hastened. A Mission assumes that there is some real spiritual life in the parish, a willingness to pray, and an awakened, or awakening, desire for greater earnestness and devotion.

This implies that there will be a general attendance at the Mission services on the part of the communicants of the parish and their families. Of course some individuals will probably stay away. That is not fatal. But the Mission is not likely to be of real benefit if any clearly-marked section of the parish, the well-to-do for example, hold aloof.

Secondly, a Mission should not be held in a parish which is without a priest, or where the priest has only lately come. It is in the priest, as the natural leader and head of his people, that the parish realizes its unity and is conscious of its divinely-appointed purpose. A Mission requires the presence of a settled incumbent, to whom, as a centre and focus, all that is undertaken by the Missioners can work up. And he should have been among his people long enough to have come to some actual knowledge of them, and to have won their confidence and loyalty.

And it would also be unwise to hold a Mis-

sion in a place which the priest is about to leave, to take up work elsewhere. Of course a priest cannot be compelled to remain because a Mission has been held, but there should be a good prospect of his continuing in his cure for a considerable time. The reason for this is that, to a large extent, a Mission is a time for sowing seeds. And often they do not ripen till after a year or two,— sometimes of course not for many years. If, before they come to maturity, there has been a change in the rectorship, the newcomer will be much less able to gather up the spiritual fruits.

There are yet other conditions which must be taken into account as to a Mission. Fr. Paul Bull, C.R., says:

"In deciding the matter, there is much need of prayer and seeking God's guidance, and it is necessary to examine the motive for desiring a Mission. The misuse of Missions has done much to destroy their force. When they are used to relieve the dead monotony of unspiritual work — a 'Bazaar one year and a Mission the next'— by mere love of excitement and a craving for novelty . . . or when they are conducted without any stern discipline of fasting and self-denial . . . or when they are used as an opportunity for

preaching some doctrine which timidity has feared to teach, or to increase statistics, or for introducing some subtle advance in ritual, some deeper shade of coloured stoles,— then they are not justified, and cannot be a blessing to a parish. To storm the heights of Heaven and stir the depths of the soul, and under cover of this great bombardment to aim at some such triviality as this, is to invoke the flames of Pentecost to light a farthing dip, and is a betrayal of God and man."

It would be unfair thus strongly to emphasize the need of right conditions for the Mission on the part of the parish and not to say something as to what is necessary for the Mission on the part of those who are to preach it. To attempt to describe all the natural gifts and supernatural graces that are to be desired in a Missioner would be superfluous, perhaps disheartening. But a few points can be noted.

It is of very great importance that the Missioner should be one in whom the parish priest can place entire confidence, and who can therefore be left free to teach what he believes and to practice what he thinks will be of help to the people. Few things are more certain to frustrate the efforts of a sincere and devout Missioner than to attempt to

preach a Mission handicapped by pledges "not to say this," and "not to do that." *Conferences* can be given along definite lines exclusive of certain sides of truth. But in a Mission the relation of the Missioner to those who listen to him night by night, many of whom will be consulting him individually, is so intimate that any attempt to practise "reserve" and to exercise "caution" will inevitably be seen, and will generate an atmosphere of misgiving and suspicion. The people will feel that the Missioner is not speaking out his whole heart to them, and that he is wanting either in frankness or in courage.

On the other hand it would be a mistake to choose as a Missioner a priest who has become the exponent of some extreme doctrine or practice, and who has lost the ability to keep "the proportion of faith." There have been instances where such a man, by the downright goodness and real humility of his character, has accomplished wonderful results in the way of helping souls. But, as a rule, a Missioner should be one who takes, not a "safe" but a "Catholic" position, and puts "first things first."

The word *Missioner* has been used as though the normal thing were to have but

one priest conduct a Mission. But this is not what is meant. It is very difficult for one man to carry through a Mission without becoming overstrained, and so running grave risks of falling into repetition or prolixity or exaggeration or some other fault. And two Missioners can present the truth in a much more rounded and less individual way, provided, that is, they are thoroughly *en rapport,* are entirely accustomed to working together, and above all have one and the same method of presenting familiar truths. This is difficult to achieve unless the men have both been moulded by some strong and dominating mind. Or unless they belong to a Religious Community where there is a true sharing together in thought and speech as well as in external goods, and where each is glad to forget himself and to represent the whole Community, by expressing himself in forms of the Community spirit.

If the parish is large, and there is to be a children's Mission at the same time as that for the older people, then there will be work sufficient to fill the time of three Missioners. If this seems too much for the parish to undertake it should be remembered that a Mission should not be held in the same parish oftener than once in five years, and that when

held there should be a generous effort to make it accomplish the utmost for the souls of old and young.

CHAPTER III

HOW SHOULD A PARISH PREPARE FOR A MISSION?

GRANTED that the conditions in a parish render it ripe for a Mission, and that trained Mission priests are to be had, then comes the question as to what preparation is necessary. Probably this is the point at which most parish priests hesitate and hold back. They are anxious that their people should have all the help that is possible. They feel that a Mission might bring many blessings to the parish. But they do not know what will be expected of them in making ready for a Mission, and they shrink from having their ministry tested by standards of which they are ignorant.

It will be requisite, therefore, to go very thoroughly into the details of preparation. Then it may become evident that there is nothing which cannot be accomplished by care and good-will, and also that the work of preparation will of itself, even were the Mis-

sion given up at the last moment, stimulate and strengthen the parish in various ways.

The Preparation in Prayer

Before all else let it be realized, and constantly kept in mind, that the supremely necessary thing in making ready for a Mission is earnest and persevering prayer. It is this which explains the rule that six months at least should be devoted to the work of preparing for a Mission. A parish priest in a small town has been known to say: "What is the use of announcing the Mission so long beforehand? I can get word to all my people in twenty-four hours." But the supplications of a congregation, pleading that it may be renewed and increased in faith and holiness, cannot be made in such summary fashion. Perseverance, "continuance," in prayer is one of the conditions of prayer being heard and answered. "Pray without ceasing." "Continuing instant in prayer." "Men ought always to pray and not to faint," "for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

The one most prevailing supplication that can be made to God is the showing forth of the Lord's death in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. It will be a great help and

blessing if the parish priest brings together some at least of his people each week for an offering of the Holy Sacrifice with the special intention of the Mission. Perhaps a number of families will agree to have one member of the family present each week. All the promises made to prayer gather about the Act accomplished at the altar.

Prayer should be both individual and in common. In some places the parish priest has printed a brief prayer ("Almighty God bless, we pray Thee, the Mission to be held in this parish, and may Thy Holy Spirit work by it for the salvation of our souls, and to the glory of Thy great Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord") and given it out to all who would promise to say it so many times each week until the end of the Mission. A list of these individuals will show who are "agreeing together" to labour in prayer for the Mission.

This same prayer, or some other, can be used with groups of people. Thus, at every gathering of the vestry, at every Guild meeting, choir rehearsal, instruction to Sunday School teachers, etc., it would be well for all to kneel and say a prayer in concert. If at such times some individuals can be encouraged to mention subjects for intercession, or

to say a prayer in his or her own words, it will be a help to all. One of the most pressing needs in the Church to-day is to recover the practice of " free prayer " on the part of the laity. The preparation for a Mission is a peculiarly favourable time for introducing this as a permanent element in the life of a parish, and a factor in its true efficiency.

In some parishes it will be possible to gather a dozen or twenty neighbours in a private house, in one and another part of the parish, and hold a service of intercession and prayer for a blessing on the Mission. Such a service need not last more than fifteen minutes. A very simple form to follow is for each one present to mention some subject for prayer, or describe some one needing prayer, and then for all to say an " Our Father " together aloud.

In any case the parish priest can kneel immediately after the blessing at the close of all public services in church, and say a prayer for the Mission. And anything that can be done to develop among the people the habit of writing down requests for prayer, and placing them in a box at the door, to be used as the parish priest may deem convenient, will be a present good, and an assistance when the Mission begins.

The Preparation in Notices

As to giving notice of the Mission the aim should be to work up an interest in the approaching Mission which shall widen and increase month by month until the opening night. To this end it will be well for the parish priest to make some reference to the Mission every Sunday at least. With a little care and planning, some *new* fact in regard to the Mission can be announced every week, as fresh points come to be decided. Thus on one Sunday the purpose to hold a Mission might be announced. The next Sunday a description could be given as to just what the Mission will be. The following Sunday the exact date for the opening of the Mission could be stated. A week later the names of the Missioners might be given, with some information about them. And so on. Each new fact will be caught up by those present and carried forth to friends and neighbours, thus keeping the Mission before them.

Then, too, in any special appeal made to the people — for the better observance of Christmas or Lent for example — it will be well to add, as one further argument for faithfulness, that "this will be the last Christmas,— or Lent,— before the Mis-

sion." The effort must be to make the Mission a *cause* which excites the interest and stirs the imagination of the people, which calls forth their loyalty and rouses their enthusiasm. Very little will be accomplished by printed notices, or flaring bill-boards. It is easy, to be sure, to get two or three willing workers to come and "address envelopes," and mail some hundreds of notices to members of the parish. But the time is long past, in most places, where such notices will have much effect. It will be of no avail for the parish priest who has depended on this well-worn method of advertising to stand up in a half-empty church at the first service of the Mission and say: "We clergy have done our part. We have sent notices to every person in the parish. We are at a loss to understand why they are not here."

The thing that never becomes antiquated and outworn, as every sagacious business man knows, is the wise, tactful, winning approach of one person to another. The success that in many parishes has attended the "Every Member Canvass" points the way in which attendance at a Mission should be secured. Let the priest organize his helpers, and give them the encouragement of his example in going from door to door and from street to

street, in personal visitation of his own people at any rate.

It is this direct, personal appeal which really counts. Those who have studied Missions and similar efforts bear witness that what leads the average individual,— in the parish or outside — to come to the Mission is the discovery that other people are thinking and talking about it, and looking forward to it with eagerness, or are going to the services and finding an inspiration in them.

The Preparation in Singing

Whatever may be justly said as to the condition of vocal music in this country, there is no doubt that American people love to sing, and find in the voicing of some familiar tune a true expression of strong feeling, and a powerful incentive to emotion. Anyone who has attended a great political convention knows the psychologic effect of some popular campaign song started at the right time; knows too how curiously, partly as the result of the singing, religious enthusiasm breaks out in the crises of political excitement. Here, then, is a factor to be vigorously used in the work of a Mission. But to do that requires careful preparation.

It is often said that it is not of advantage

to have a choir at Mission services. That is not quite accurate. The aim should be to "have a choir," but to make it consist of the whole congregation. This will require steady work in the way of rehearsals beforehand. The best way to conduct these rehearsals is to hold them on every Sunday evening for two months before the Mission. Let the parish priest use a shortened form of Evensong, or preach a very short sermon, and then, the congregation remaining seated, let an experienced choirleader,— if possible one possessing some personal magnetism and ability to create enthusiasm — train all those who are present in the Mission hymns. The Church Hymnal, weak as it is in sacramental hymns, is fairly rich in Mission hymns. Besides these it will help very much to have a dozen or more new hymns with stirring tunes, easily learned (if they are taught one line at a time), struck off for use in the Mission. These rehearsals will bring the thought of the Mission before the minds of the people in a very practical way, and having learned to sing several new and taking hymns in the rehearsals they will want to come and sing them in the Mission.

If there is to be a Children's Mission the children will also require practice in singing.

In some places it will be possible to have a Children's Mass Eucharist on every day in the week, and it will always be possible to have one on the Saturdays and Sundays. With a little patience and perseverance children can be taught to sing a simply arranged service, and to enter into it with joyous reverence and devotion.

All this means, of course, that the result aimed at during the months of preparation should be to bring the parish to its high-water mark of expectation and devotion. With the Mission in full view this is sometimes more possible than the parish priest himself anticipated. He may find that, as the interest increases, he can develop activities and agencies for good that have never been called forth before. New members can be enrolled in Guilds and other parish organizations. A higher and more spiritual character can be given to the Guild meetings. The gatherings of the younger boys and girls to practise the music for the Children's Mission can be developed into permanent Guilds that will conserve and carry on the earnestness that the Mission will bring. If the parish covers a good deal of ground, straggling off to scattered suburbs and outlying villages, cottage services can be started, that

may be the beginning of mission chapels later on. The principle which seems clearly to obtain in the progress of the divine kingdom of grace is not that we are to *depend* upon occasional spasmodic efforts, yielding to laxness and indifference between whiles, but that, if we keep on faithfully doing our best, we may look for special seasons of renewing and reinvigoration.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT IS A "MISSION SERVICE"?

"DEFINE your terms!" This demand has, in many controversies, brought the whole question to an issue. It serves here to accentuate the importance of giving some definite meaning to the words used in reference to special religious services. Where the advertising of wares is by word of mouth, the shrillest and most penetrating voice prevails over less strident competitors. Nowadays, when we depend on the printed word to secure attention, we resort to capital letters, or to words which have large and impressive associations. Thus a few hours of devotion in church is called a "Quiet Day," a few extra sermons from a visiting priest are dubbed a "Mission," almost any sort of extra-liturgical exercise in church is spoken of as a "Mission Service." It would surely be better — it would avoid the risk of unreality and cant,— if we could say what we mean, and *define our terms,* to ourselves at least, before we use them.

Let us agree, then, to restrict the name "Mission Service" to that which is found as the principal night service in a Parochial Mission. Such a service could, of course, be held quite apart from a Parochial Mission; it might, for example, be the service held in a parish church every Sunday evening in Lent. But the night service in a Parochial Mission would be the norm, and, so far as possible, this and this only would be called a "Mission Service." Then the announcement of such a service would convey a distinct and well known meaning.

We will now proceed to describe such a service, with some suggestions regarding it.

The Preparation

The aim of a "Mission," and so of a "Mission Service," is to gather within the church people of all sorts and conditions, especially those who are more or less careless and indifferent to the Christian Faith or who sit loose to religion altogether. This being the case it is a great help if, as soon as a dozen or twenty people have come into the church for such a service, they can be occupied in singing the Mission hymns. This can be done, in the earlier part of a Parochial Mission at any rate, under the form of a practis-

ing of the hymns. The person who conducts the practise, or who at least announces the hymns, should stand at the head of the broad aisle, and encourage those who come in to take their places as near the front as may be. The people need not be kept standing during the singing, but may well remain seated. This preparation for a Mission ought to be much more than a way of passing the time. Under a good leader (a layman, if possessed of tact, a fair voice, and contagious good nature, is often better for the purpose than a priest) much can be done to *unify* the congregation, by generating a sense of friendliness and good fellowship, and to open hearts to a welcome of the truth by liberating the religious emotions in hearty hymn-singing. The leader will do well to throw in remarks as to the significance of the hymns when he announces them, and to ask persons to suggest hymns.

The Introductory Devotions

Exactly at the hour set for the Mission service to begin, the priest who is to take the opening devotions should go to the pulpit and kneel for silent prayer. This will be the signal for the preparatory singing to

come to an end. After a brief pause the priest will rise and say: "Let us all stand and sing" such-and-such a hymn, reading the first line. The organist should be reminded that *singing on the part of the people* is the one thing at which to aim. What contributes to the value of a Mission Service is not the organ but the volume of the people's voices as they enter into the meaning of the words they sing, and make the hymn a real expression of their own hearts. The people in their singing should neither be *driven* nor *drowned* by the organ but encouraged and supported. Mission hymns often differ very widely from one another; some of them are tender and pathetic, others are joyous and exultant. The hymn is chosen, not for the *tune* alone but also for the *words,* and the time can be determined only by the character of the words. Perhaps on the whole the singing is apt to be too fast rather than too slow, but this varies with different congregations. A strong, steady voice, to lead both organ and people, is of great service. If the tune is perfectly familiar it need not be played all through before the people begin to sing. Let the organist strike a few chords and then give the first note distinctly. There

should of course be no "voluntaries" before or after the service, and no interludes between the verses of the hymns.

As soon as the hymn is ended the priest says: "Let us all kneel down and speak to God," or gives some other call to prayer. When all who will do so have knelt down and the church is still, he says: "Lord, have mercy upon us," the people respond: "Christ, have mercy upon us," he says again: "Lord, have mercy upon us," and then, slowly and distinctly the "Our Father," ending it with: "Deliver us from evil. *Amen.*" Then one or two prayers, said slowly, should follow. These may be extempore or repeated from memory. Here is a prayer which has been found useful:

"O Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, Who seekest those who are gone astray, bindest up those who are broken and healest those who are sick: Bless the effort we are making to draw nearer unto Thee. Open the deaf ears of the wanderers that they may hear the words which belong unto their salvation; and grant that those whom Thou dost raise to newness of life may through Thy grace persevere unto the end. Through Thy mercy, O our God, Who livest and reignest, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. *Amen.*"

The prayers naturally conclude with: "The Grace of our Lord." Then the priest rises and gives out the "Notices." These, in a Parochial Mission, include the hours of the services, an invitation to put requests for intercession into a box near the door, and any other matters to be made known. In any case a clear explanation of the plan of the Mission Service should be given, especially as to the character of the "after meeting," and a request made that those who do not wish to remain to the *after meeting* will leave during the hymn after the "instruction."

After the notices the priest reads a passage of Scripture, which is either the text for his sermon, or has some connection with the subject on which he is about to speak. Then another hymn is given out, and during this the priest kneels for his private prayers before preaching. Where two priests are conducting a Parochial Mission it seems a good division for one of them to take the opening devotions and the *instruction,* and the other the mission sermon and the *after meeting.* Sometimes they alternate, one taking the Mission sermon one night, and the other the next. But this, of course, is a matter of mutual agreement between them. It is, however, of importance that the course

should be clearly marked out beforehand, and that each knows what the other is going to say.

The Mission Sermon

The *Mission sermon* is, in a very real sense, the heart of a Mission, or of a Mission Service. The expressions "*preaching* a Mission" and "a preaching service" bear witness to the sermon as that which characterizes these efforts. It is in the *Mission* sermon that the *Mission* priest strives to fulfil the work which he has been *commissioned* to do.

Just what is the *object* of the Mission sermon? That is a question well worth asking. If the end to be achieved by a sermon were more often clearly formulated by the preacher before he stands up to speak in public, sermons would not so often fail of any definite result. What, then, is it that a Mission priest tries to do in his sermon? It is to *create a want,* to get people to *want to be good.* This may seem too general and vague. But it is far less general and vague than the mental attitude of most of his hearers. What is the psychologic state of the average man in regard to himself? It is one of self-justification and self-satisfaction. By

all sorts of arguments and mental processes, some of them illogical and crooked enough, he has convinced himself that he is really a very excellent person, intelligent above the average of his associates, with admirable intentions, although unavoidably handicapped in carrying them out, deserving of a good deal better treatment than he receives from society about him, and sure of finding himself in improved conditions in whatever life may succeed to this. If he is not better than he is that is not his fault, and on the other hand it is wholly due to himself that he behaves as well as he does. *This* state of mind — not aggressive unbelief, or open vice, or conscious disobedience to God — is, in the case of the majority of people, the real obstacle to the appeal of religion. It is the cause of indifference, worldliness, superficiality, careless living, and negative atheism. It is the attitude of the *modern* Pharisee. The Pharisee of our Lord's time went to church, and flattered himself on the exact performance of his religious duties. The Pharisee of the present time stays away from church, and thanks God he is not like those who go. "The essence of Pharisaism does not consist in broad phylacteries and prayers at the corners of the street; it lies rather in *a low stand-*

ard fairly well fulfilled, in a generally diffused sense of satisfaction which forbids progress by crushing the motive from its source." [1] Now the chief purpose of a Mission, of a Mission Service, of a Mission sermon, must be to break down this smug and complacent self-satisfaction, and to stir the soul to discontent with itself and a longing for better things. Then, and only then, will the soul listen eagerly to the assurance that God cares that it should be better, to the way by which He will deliver it from its sins in the past, and bring it to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in time to come.

What sort of a sermon will achieve this? Of course no simple recipe can be given. For one thing it is impossible to separate the spoken word from the personality and the character of the speaker. To a worldly and self-seeking ecclesiastic Emerson said: "Sir, what you *are* speaks so loud I can't hear what you *say*." Happily the converse is true, and the intense earnestness and spirituality of the speaker may burn through all sorts of faults in his diction. A Bishop described lately his listening to a Mission priest in a little Italian church, and said that it was the most impressive sermon he ever heard,

[1] Dean Robbins in *An Essay towards Faith.*

although he could not understand a single word.

Still, this ought to furnish no excuse for not doing all that is possible to make the sermon effective, in its *subject,* its *method,* and its *manner of delivery.*

Speaking generally, there is no better *subject* than that furnished by one or another of our Lord's parables. Much labour is, of course, necessary to reproduce the parable in a new and unexpected, and so in a fresh and stirring way. But no one who attempts Mission preaching ought to dispense himself from hard work. A Mission sermon ought to be as little as possible *extempore.* One of the greatest Mission preachers in England said that a Mission sermon wasn't worth much until it had been preached at least twenty times. The most popular preacher in this country at present preaches the same sermon over and over again, and does not hesitate in the presence of enormous congregations to *read* a sermon, which has been written out with great care.

As to *methods,* a Mission sermon should not occupy more than twenty minutes in its delivery. John Wesley said that no one is converted after the first twenty minutes. That has been the experience as to sermons

preached in the chapel of one of our largest universities. This does not, of course, mean that *all* sermons should be reduced to so brief a time, but that if the special purpose aimed at in a *Mission sermon* is not attained in twenty minutes, it shows that the speaker is not going, on that occasion, to secure the desired reaction on the part of his hearers. The impulse of a speaker under such circumstances is to keep on talking, but to do so is worse than useless. More specifically the method of a Mission sermon should be in the first hundred words to create an anticipation in the minds of the people that they are going to be interested; then to bring home to them some facts about themselves, which they know to be true but do not often think about; then to drive home upon them the conviction that God is really thinking about them, is going to do something for them, and expects something from them in return, and finally and above all to bring the sermon to the climax of an intense, but *very brief,* appeal, to each individual to reach some *decision,* to commit himself by some definite *choice,* however interior and known only to himself this may be. In a Mission there would not be a call to the same decision each night. On the first evening the Mission preacher might aim

only to bring as many of his hearers as possible to resolve in their own minds to "make the Mission" or at least to come the next evening. Later in the Mission people might be urged to speak to one of the Mission priests or Mission workers, with the hope that they would do so during the after meeting or at its close.

There should be no hard and fast rule always to have the Mission Sermon precede and the Instruction follow. In some cases it would be well to give the Instruction first and then preach the sermon with the distinct purpose of bringing the whole service to its climax in the concluding part of the sermon. This might well be the case in a Mission, when the earnestness on the part of the people showed that the time had come for a supreme appeal.

The *manner* of a Mission preacher is so personal to himself that not much that is useful can be laid down in regard to it. Anything that suggested imitation or artifice would be fatal. Many other faults are too evident to need mention. In general the Mission preacher must somehow convince his hearers that he believes in them, that he is taking them into his confidence, that he is being perfectly frank and open with them,

and then that he is sure that he has a message for them, that it is a message which they need, that it is a message that he needs himself, and that it is a message from One Who died for them and for him.

The Instruction

The Mission Sermon is followed at once by a hymn. Then follows the *Instruction,* — unless, as said above, the order is reversed. If there are two Mission priests then it is almost always better that one should take the sermon, the other the instruction. If there is but one Mission priest he can step out during the singing of the hymn after the sermon and then return, wearing his cassock, and take his place at the head of the broad aisle, which seems to be the best place from which to give the instruction, provided the acoustics of the church admit of it. (Care should be taken that there is no light *behind* the speaker, such would weary the eyes of the people, who will be *looking* as well as *listening.*)

What is the purpose of the Instruction? It should be carefully explained to the congregation. It is to give them, in an orderly, progressive way, those facts of the Christian Revelation, which are most directly concerned with the return of the soul to

God, and the dedication of itself afresh to Him.

When Bp. Wilkinson began the great Mission in Leeds, attended every night by from three to four thousand people, he described his message to Leeds as threefold: "to show men their sin; to show men their Saviour; to lead them to surrender themselves to Christ." [1]

Fr. Paul Bull, C. R., summarizes the subjects of the Mission Instruction very clearly: "the Way of Salvation; the Baptismal Covenant; Sin, its nature, consequence, and cure; how to find out our sins; Repentance; Contrition; Confession; Amendment of Life; Occasions of Sin; Restitution; a Rule of Life; Aids to Perseverance."

We would make three remarks upon this scheme. The first is that the course of instructions — for they should have an orderly continuity — might well begin with a clear statement of the Being of God, and of His Purpose for creation and for the individual soul. And one can hardly imagine a Mission priest failing to bring home to his hearers the love of Jesus as the one Hope of

[1] *The Memoir of George Howard Wilkinson,* by the Rev. Arthur Mason, D.D. (the unabridged edition) contains in its two volumes a large amount of most interesting and valuable material about Parochial Missions.

sinners, the tenderness of His compassion, the grace of His voluntary sufferings, the glory of His victorious Death, the attraction of His example, the power of His endless Life. Yet, in our popular religion, there has been such an exclusive emphasis upon our Lord's Humanity, with no adequate declaration of His Deity, that the very conception of the eternal Godhead has tended to become abstract and indistinct, until the strange assertion has been made: "I could be content with Christianity without God."

Then, second, it seems well to give a very explicit statement as to *Absolution,* the way in which God delivers the soul from its sins, first in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, then in the Sacrament of Penance, before instruction is given as to *Confession,* in the presence of a priest, of grave sins after baptism. It is the consciousness of the goodness of God in bringing the soul to repentance and of His longing to cleanse and restore it which most moves it to long to witness to its true contrition by a sincere and outspoken confession of its misdeeds.

And, thirdly, there should be very clear instruction to the whole congregation (even though there should be also a special course of addresses on those subjects earlier in the

day), on the Holy Eucharist as the great act of Christian Worship, the Real Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ under the forms of Bread and Wine, the Sacrifice and the Communion.

The instruction should be given in a very familiar and informal way, and in an almost conversational tone, though with utmost reverence and with a prayerful longing to bring home to dying men and women the truth on which they can build up their lives in response to the love of God for them. The people should be told that the Mission priests want them to make great decisions, that some souls may be called to great sacrifices, but that they want them to act, not upon the transitory excitement of their religious emotions, but upon their conviction of the truth as God has made it known. There should be very little of a controversial character in the instructions, although now and then some commonplace sophistry can be exposed; and there should be no attack upon any class of people, or any one religious denomination.

The After Meeting

Before the hymn after the instruction is given out, the Mission priest should again

explain that during the hymn any persons who do not wish to stay for the *after meeting* may leave the church. It is important that some *should* leave, in order to produce the feeling that those who remain are making a free choice in doing so.

The after meeting should be a time of quiet deepening of the impression already made. There is no set form for it. The Mission priest may kneel down in the broad aisle near the end of the church and ask the people to repeat some words of prayer — such as: "O God, show me my sins; O God, make me sorry for my sins; O God, deliver me from my sins,"— after him. There may be special intercession. There may be times of silence. There may be a brief meditation. There may be a hymn sung softly. It is well, if the people are much moved, to have them go out as each feels inclined, those who are most impelled to stay lingering behind the others. This gives opportunity for the Mission priest to speak to individuals, to pray with them, or to make appointments for confession.

CHAPTER V

ADJUNCTS OF A PAROCHIAL MISSION

THE plan for a "Nation-wide Mission" has been taken up in many parts of the country. There is ground for hope that much good will be accomplished. But as the arrangements come to be announced it is evident that what will be attempted will not be "Parochial Missions" as we understand them, and have tried to describe them in this series of articles, but what are more and more often spoken of as "Preaching Missions," or what we are wont to call "Conferences." This is entirely wise and right. The time between the announcement of the Nation-wide Mission and Advent was all too short for the preparation needed for a thorough Parochial Mission, and many priests who can give very helpful Conferences have had no opportunity of training in the conduct of a Parochial Mission.

But there will, of course, be considerable variety in the way the Nation-wide Mission is carried out, and while in some parishes

there will be simply a week of preaching, in others there will be a series of Mission Services, such as were described in the preceding chapter. In connection with these Mission Services several of the exercises of a Parochial Mission could be introduced, and it may be worth while, in connection with this series of articles, to offer some suggestion as to these "adjuncts of a Parochial Mission."

Intercession Services

One of the simplest and most helpful of these "adjuncts" is a series of intercession services. Indeed "intercession" is an inevitable outcome of any Mission in which the appeal really goes home to men's hearts. That is to say, the awakening of souls to their need of God, to His longing for them, to the sin that is holding them back from Him, will lead them to ask for the prayers of the Mission priests, and perhaps also quite definitely for the prayers of the congregation. To provide for the meeting and the extending of this desire it is well to have a large number of little slips, such as the form printed on the opposite page.

These can be given out at the door as the people leave each evening, all persons hav-

REQUEST FOR PRAYERS
(WRITE ONLY ONE REQUEST ON EACH SLIP.)
Prayers are asked for
(USE CHRISTIAN NAME ONLY.)

ing been urged, when the notices were given out, to write at least one request for prayer for one's self or for some other soul. The value of the slips is that people will more readily put but one request on each slip; this greatly facilitates an orderly arrangement of the requests, although it is better if they are copied off into a blank-book under such heads as —" the Unconverted;" " the Unbelieving;" " the Unbaptized;" " the Unconfirmed and those not yet communicants;" " the Tempted;" " the Sick and Suffering;" " the Faithful;" " Church Interests (such as guilds, societies, parishes, etc.);" " Missionary Objects;" " the Faithful Departed."

(A collect or an Our Father can be used after each group.)

It is well to instruct people not to put down the last names of those prayed for, or unusual Christian names, but preferably to describe the person as "a father," "a child," "a friend." Near the door, in a conspicuous position, should be a box, with a slit in the cover, clearly marked "INTERCESSIONS."

As to the time when the intercessions shall be offered, it does not seem well to give them out as the people come in to the service. The time before service can well be used by those who come for silent prayer, but to gather up the congregation into a common act of intercession it should first have been unified by listening to an earnest exhortation and joining in some stirring hymns. The *after meeting* can sometimes be used for an intercession service, or such a service may be held at some earlier hour in the day as at noon. The priest who conducts the service should take his place so that the congregation can hear him without difficulty. Kneeling at the head of the middle aisle facing the altar is almost the *worst* position. It is better to kneel at the foot of the aisle, or, in a large church, in the pulpit facing the people,

or even to stand in the pulpit while the people kneel. As the Mission goes on the intercessions may have to be condensed ("For fifteen persons to be baptized," etc.). In one Mission in an eastern city before the close of the two weeks some fifteen hundred souls were being prayed for. In some places much good has followed from holding intercession services in private homes, a few neighbours having been invited to come in. The service should not be more than fifteen or twenty minutes long. Requests can be made *viva voce*.

The Question Box

Quite different from the intercession service is the answering of questions which have been placed in a special box labelled "QUESTIONS." There is diversity of opinion as to the value of this feature. Much depends upon the intelligence of the congregation. It should not be felt necessary to answer *all* the questions. Questions put in for evidently controversial purposes had better be ignored. Great care should be taken that no tone or sarcasm or ridicule comes into the answers to questions. The answers should in general be brief and pointed but always kindly and genial. It is of great importance

that a *limited* time should be allotted to the answering of questions, and that it should never be exceeded. Unless great pains are taken, and careful preparation made beforehand, the answers will drag out to a wearisome length, and the whole evening will get out of proportion. By far the best time for the answering of questions is *before* the Mission service begins. If this is clearly announced, those who are interested will be apt to come early to hear the questions answered. A few hymns can be interspersed. But the Mission service should begin exactly at the hour announced.

Services for Children

If there are two — still more if there are three — Mission priests conducting a Parochial Mission it should be possible to have a full Children's Mission carried on along with the Mission for older people. This, on the lines followed by the Order of the Holy Cross, would involve the children being present for an hour and a quarter every afternoon, and would require the services of four or five people besides the Mission Priests. The whole rather elaborate method is described at length in a tract published by the Order of the Holy Cross entitled *How*

to Conduct the Catechism. It does not seem necessary to repeat that here.

The method followed by Fr. Powell, Superior of the Society of St. John the Evangelist in this country, is given in his own words:

"The Children's Mission as I conduct it is I am afraid a very simple, primitive thing, not at all elaborate. To begin with in any Mission, whether in town or country, I always insist upon a Children's Eucharist every day. I do not think I have ever had a Mission in any place where the parish priest did not begin by saying that it would be quite impossible to get the children, and yet I have never had a Mission in which the Children's Eucharist was not only successful numerically, but became the greatest spiritual blessing of the whole Mission, whether in big cities like Leeds or New York, or in some remote country parish in England, or in a little old-fashioned New England town like Nantucket. I generally send some music ahead which the children learn, and I always try to give a five-minute instruction on some matter connected with the sacraments. My experience has generally been that a good many of the parents come to this Children's Eucharist, and by the end of the Mission it is a very popular service.

"Then there would be of course a short afternoon Mission service, generally from four to five o'clock. Begin with a hymn and a prayer or two, and then an address, another hymn, another address or instruction. Generally I would have the children say short intercessions after me, also Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, and Contrition. I expect all the children who attend the Mission to make their confessions, all except the very little ones, and I find that as a rule they all do. Generally there is some music to learn in the afternoon, and boys to be instructed in serving, and I also encourage the children to find other children who are not baptised, and before the end of the Mission we generally have a number of baptisms, and a good confirmation class formed.

"I find that something of that sort gives point and focus. It gives the children something to aim at, and starts them as missionaries. Every boy or girl who comes to confession is supposed to go and find some other child who in their opinion needs to make a confession. I remember a Mission that I had in a large city with Father Field some twenty-one or twenty-two years ago. I told the children one afternoon that no child would be allowed at the evening service

unless he or she brought some one else who was not otherwise coming; and one of the children I remember brought to church that night a girl off the streets, who continued to come to the Mission and found in it a true conversion. She told me how that child had stood in front of her and insisted on her coming: 'Because,' she said, 'the Father won't let me go unless I have some one with me, and I don't know who to bring if you don't come.' The young woman made her confession, and began an entirely new life. She is now well married, has a good husband and children, and whenever I visit that city again she brings them all to see me. Sometimes in a Children's Mission I promise to tell the children a good long story every afternoon. We have the regular Mission service first, and then a story out of the Bible, any one of the many dramatic stories, told as far as possible in modern language. The children love it."

Resolutions

As the last service of a Parochial Mission or of a series of Mission Services arrives, it is very important that those who have been present should not be allowed to feel that the Mission is simply over and done for,

that it is left behind as a mere past experience, that it is "a closed issue." They should be made to realize that, as the old Scotch woman said when asked on return from church whether the sermon was done so soon: "Nae, the sermon is preachit but it is na dune yet." While the preaching of the Mission may be over, the Mission must go on to find its fulfilment in the lives of those who have heard its message as the call of God to their souls. To bring this to a definite result it is very much worth while to encourage people to make a thoroughly practical *resolution,* which they can sign and bring to the Mission Priest for his signature, and for his blessing on themselves. It should be made perfectly clear that *general* resolutions, such as: "I resolve to be good," or "to keep my baptismal vows," or "to serve God for the rest of my life" may easily be worse than useless. They give present ease to the conscience, but they are too vague to have any enduring effect. The resolution should be to do something *definite,* such as to say one's prayers every morning, to make one's Communion so often, to pray every day for grace to resist some particular sin. It requires but a moment's thought to discover

whether or not one is keeping such a resolution.

Moreover the resolution should be for a limited time, until the next Easter for instance, or for six months or a year. Then it becomes a factor in the working out of one's life, like any well-understood engagement with a human friend. Here is a form which has been found useful for such resolutions.

Trusting in the help of God, and the grace of His Sacraments, I resolve that, until.....I will

.....

.....

.....

Mission Priest

CHAPTER VI

THE FRUITS OF THE MISSION

ONE of the conditions which may reasonably be laid down for a Parochial Mission is that it should not be held in a parish where the incumbent has but recently come, or where he is expecting soon to leave. To the priest who accepts the call to a parish there comes, in the majority of cases, a succession of mental attitudes, more or less clearly marked. The first of these, that which attends his entrance on his cure of souls, is the attitude of hope and assurance. The work of his predecessor probably seems ineffective and his methods mistaken, but the reasons for this appear obvious, and the new-comer is confident that he can avoid the blunders that have been made, and put the parish into good condition. The people, in this first stage, are full of hospitable welcome, and all the conditions give promise of a prosperous and successful ministry.

Upon this time of mutual congratulation follows after a few months, sometimes

sooner, a period of disillusion. The new incumbent finds himself hemmed about with limitations. His plans for the parish do not find acceptance. Prejudices emerge. People who showed him some attentions at the outset consider themselves dispensed from further effort. The novelty of his presence and personality wears off. His preaching has less power of attraction. Disagreements arise. Misunderstandings multiply. He begins to discover the skeletons in the parish cupboards, the ugly scandals and social antipathies. The bright promise of the future fades out. He begins to feel that he made a mistake in undertaking the work at all.

This second attitude on the part of the priest in relation to his parish is usually most clearly defined at the end of two years in the work. That is the time when the outlook becomes most discouraging, and by consequence it is the time when most clerical changes are made. (It has been estimated that if we had the former Methodist rule requiring a change of parishes at the end of three years we should have longer pastorates than we do.)

Now it goes without saying that if a Mission is held soon after a priest has come to a

parish, then in case there is any reaction after the Mission — and there is bound to be some "settling down" at least — the second stage will tend to become more distressing and disheartening, and the climax will be hastened. It seems well, therefore, that a full Parochial Mission (this does not refer to Conferences) should not be held in a parish until the priest has been in charge for somewhat over two years. Then the parish will probably have taken an upward tack, the priest will have held on and got his bearings, and a Mission will accelerate the progress of the parish in the right direction.

On the other hand it seems altogether unfortunate to hold a Mission in a parish where the priest is about to leave. As was said in the last chapter the close of the Mission services is not the real end of the Mission. The Mission should go on in the hearts of individuals, and in the life of the parish, for several years afterwards. But such persistence is gravely imperilled if the parish has to bear the shock of the incumbent leaving and a stranger coming to take his place. Such a change breaks in upon what should be the orderly growth and development of the seed planted in the Mission, and much that might have come to fruition blights off. It is a

matter of common experience, in parishes where a Mission has been preached, that people will come with spiritual needs of which the Mission made them conscious, months or even a year or two after the Mission was preached. One such person, who came to make a first confession a year after the Mission, said: "I knew twelve months ago that I ought to do this. I have known it ever since. In putting it off, I feel that I have lost just one year, in which I might have made progress in my spiritual life." It goes without saying that those who thus seek, though tardily, for the help offered them in the Mission, will come more readily to the parish priest who was present during the Mission, and who has been carrying on its work after the Mission priests left.

Therefore it is felt to be a mistake to preach a Mission in a parish where the priest is looking forward to leaving as soon as he has an opportunity to do so. Such an one is quite unfitted to "gather up the fruits."

This warning, as to the proper occasion for a Mission, being given, all that remains is to point out in what ways a Mission can be followed up, first in the parish itself, then in individual lives.

If the Mission has had the effect of awak-

ening souls to the claims of the divine love, and to the possibilities of holiness in human lives, then there will quite certainly be an expectation that things in the parish will in some way or other be different after the Mission from what they were before. This expectation is a force which may be used or wasted. It is worth while for the parish priest and the Missioners to consult most carefully and prayerfully as to what shall be undertaken, and just what new efforts shall be made. To let the Mission seem to find its fulfilment in some addition to the ritual, or some half-secular enterprise, is simply to squander what might be turned to lasting good. Whatever is put forward as the outcome of the Mission must meet the cravings and aspirations of souls that are aflame with spiritual impulse, with enthusiasm for God and the desire to bring their fellows to know Him better and to love Him more.

One thing that can almost certainly be attempted in most places is to increase the number of celebrations of the Holy Eucharist. This has a two-fold advantage. It gives outlet to the new-found devotion of the congregation, and at the same time nourishes and increases that devotion. It would tend to unite those who will avail themselves of

these added Eucharists, and to heighten their fervor, if the special attention of each pleading of the Sacrifice of our Redemption were stated beforehand. Thus, if it were said: "In future there will be a celebration of the Holy Eucharist every Thursday morning at such an hour. On the first Thursday of the month the intention will be for the *Foreign Missions of the Church,* on the second Thursday for the *Increase of Candidates of the Ministry and their Training in the Spiritual Life,* etc." It would add to the *special* character of the service if after the Blessing (We do not approve of interpolations in the Liturgy) the priest just before leaving the altar, would kneel and use some devotions in regard to the intention of the day.

Next to frequent celebrations of the Holy Eucharist a very desirable result of a Mission is some development in the work of intercession. If, as has been already suggested, this was made a definite feature in the Mission, then it becomes a very natural thing to adopt it as a permanent element in the devotional life of the parish. There are all sorts of ways in which this work of intercession can be carried on — prayer-meetings in church or in private houses, hours of intercession kept by a succession of individuals in

church or in their own homes, an intercession paper sent out every week, subjects for intercession posted up in the church porch, etc. In all directions the conviction is growing that vast results are awaiting accomplishment, and will be accomplished just as soon as God's people, trusting in His promises and obedient to His will, join together in the power of His Holy Spirit, to supplicate Him.

A third way in which the Mission can be worked into the continuous life of a parish is by the gathering of groups of individuals, to receive special instruction, looking towards some intenser devotion or some wider service. Such groups may take the form of a Bible Class, a Mission Study Class, a "Catechism of Perseverance," a Communicants' Guild (divided up according to sex and age), as well as local chapters of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew, Daughters of the King, Woman's Auxiliary, Girls' Friendly Society, etc. What should be aimed at in any such organized effort, resulting from a Mission, is that it should be a definite contribution to the spiritualizing of the parish. That is why the phrase "receive special instruction" was used. It is far too common to assume that people know what is meant by "prayer," "intercession," "corporate com-

munion," "examination of forethought," "spiritual communion," etc., whereas the truth is that most people are starving for the very simplest teaching, teaching how to do the most primary and fundamental things in the spiritual life. For this they need the kind of instruction that is given in any full and thorough Mission, but it must be repeated over and over again afterwards. Many well-intentioned persons who have been communicants for years, need to be shown how to pray, how to take their part in the Holy Mysteries, how to prepare for their confessions and communions, almost as one would show a little child. If such instruction were given to all those who join any guild or class or confraternity, and told not once but again and again in varying forms, we might soon have parishes where the Christian religion is intelligently practised.

Already a good deal has been said which will throw light upon the way in which the Mission is to be carried on in individual lives. All that remains is to point out the supreme importance of developing each individual along the line of God's purpose for him or her. "The coming of the kingdom for which we pray is accomplished not only by saving the lost but by raising some souls to

great holiness of life." It is not that the priest should seek to force souls to spiritual efforts for which they are not prepared, but that he should help each one of his people to strive after the ideal which God has for each, to respond to the vocation which He has given, to "do such good works as God has appointed" for it. Many a soul has, in a Mission, heard the Voice of Jesus, calling it to the priesthood, the mission-field, the Religious Life, and has failed to respond because there has been no wise and sympathetic guidance to encourage that soul to be faithful to the heavenly vision, to rise above the fascinations, and to despise the frowns, of the world. It is in the patient and loving care of individual souls that the parish priest can most surely gather up the fruits of a Mission into the granary of God.

The questions which can be addressed to each one who has taken part in a Mission is: "What did the Mission bring to you?" "What are you going to do as the result of the Mission?"

THE END

DATE DUE

SEP 5 '97			

HIGHSMITH #45230

Printed in USA

72876 269.6R H923
Huntington,
How to preach a mission

269.6R
H923
C
72876

GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
00100554
YO-CLI-639